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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/926,146	11/05/2001	Hisayoshi Ito	213630US3XPCT	2530

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EXAMINER

SHERRER, CURTIS EDWARD

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1761

11

DATE MAILED: 02/04/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/926,146

Applicant(s)

ITO ET AL.

Examiner

Curtis E. Sherrer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01/09/02.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5 and 9.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1, 4 and 8 are indefinite because the scope of the phrase "a standard depth of the yeast slurry normally stored" is unknown.

Claims 3, 6 and 9 are indefinite because the scope of the phrase "a standard depth of the yeast slurry" is unknown.

Claims 6 and 10 are indefinite because it appears, from the preamble, to claim a tank, but because it depends from a method claim, it is interpreted to further define the tank claimed in claim 4. The preamble should be clarified so as to clearly claim the intended invention.

Double Patenting

Claim 8 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 1.

When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Okomoto et al. (U.S Pat. No. 5,382,092)(hereinafter Okomoto).

Applicants claim a stirred tank that contains a stirring impeller that has a diameter that is 60-90% the diameter of the tank's inner walls. The recitation directed to the tank containing a yeast slurry is considered to be an intended use and therefore is not a limitation on the claimed invention. Further, the claimed height of the impeller is based on the amount of yeast that is normally stored in the tank, and because this limitation is indefinite, it cannot be analyzed with respect to the prior art.

In view of that stated above, Okomoto teaches the production of a mixing apparatus whose impellers clearly extend past the claimed minimums of 60 and 70 percent of the tanks inner diameter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

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having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-7 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grylls et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,188,407)(hereinafter Grylls) in view of Okamoto.

Grylls teaches the production of active dried yeast whereby yeast is placed in a stirred tank and a rotor blade "that moves around the periphery of the bed forcing the yeast towards the center of the bed. Thus a preferred apparatus comprises a slowly rotating (e.g. 2 to 0 or 100, preferably 10 to 20 rpm) rotor blade that sweeps the periphery of the bed and one or more fast rotating blades." (Col. 5, lines 17-30). While the phrase "periphery of the bed" indicates that the blade extends to the walls of the tank, Grylls does not literally teach the dimensions of the rotor blade.

Okomoto teaches that cited above. It would have been obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the rotor blades of Okomoto in the process of Grylls because they would extend to the periphery of the yeast bed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Curtis E. Sherrer whose telephone number is 703-308-3847. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday, 8AM-6:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 703-308-3959. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3602 for regular communications and 703-305-3602 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. E. Sherrer', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Curtis E. Sherrer
Primary Examiner
January 23, 2003